We claim:

52. A method for backup and retrieval of data operating on a first network device and a second network device, the method comprising:

providing a management software component that operates on the first network device;

providing a plurality of media software components communicatively coupled to the management software component that operate on at least a second network device; and

wherein the media software components are communicatively coupled to a storage device;

selecting a media software component among the plurality of media software components using the management software component;

controlling the selected media software component using the management software component;

controlling backup and retrieval of data to the storage device using the selected media software component which comprises at least one software module configured to control backup and retrieval of data to the storage device; and

recording a physical address on the storage device where data is located using the at least one software module which comprises an indexing software module configured to record a physical address on the storage device where the data is located.

53. The method of claim 52, further comprising controlling backup and retrieval of data to the storage device using the selected media software component which comprises at least a second software module configured to control the backup and retrieval of data to the storage device, and to manage the physical transfer of data to and from the storage device using the second software module which comprises a data mover

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software module configured to manage the physical transfer of data to and from the storage device.

54. The method of claim 52, further comprising controlling backup and retrieval of data to the storage device using the selected media software component which comprises at least a second software module configured to control the backup and retrieval of data to the storage device and physical media of the storage device using the second software module which comprises a library software module configured to control the physical media of the storage device.

55. The method of claim 52, further comprising coordinating usage of the storage device using the management software component which comprises at least one software module configured to coordinate usage of the storage device.

56. The method of claim 55, further comprising storing backup and retrieval preferences of a software application using the at least one software module which comprises an application software module configured to store backup and retrieval preferences of a software application.

57. The method of claim 55, further comprising tracking the location of data across library media using the at least one software module which comprises an archive software module configured to track the location of data across library media.

58. The method of claim 55, further comprising managing system processes using the at least one software module which comprises a jobs software module configured to manage system processes.

59. The method of claim 55, further comprising tracking usage of the storage device using the at least one software module which comprises a media usage software module configured to track usage of the storage device.

60. The method of claim 55, further comprising coordinating the transfer of data between system software components, software modules, and the storage device using the at least one software module which comprises a data transfer software module configured to coordinate the transfer of data between system software components, software modules, and the storage device.

61. The method of claim 52, further comprising providing a client software component, communicatively coupled to the management software component

and the selected media software component, that controls backups of a particular network device.

62. The method of claim 61, wherein the client software component operates on the second network device.

63. The method of claim 61, wherein the client software component operates on a third network device.

64. The method of claim 52, further comprising communicating the physical address to the management software component using the selected media software component.

65. A method for backup and retrieval of data operating across a network containing a plurality of network devices, the method comprising:

providing a management software component that operates on a first network device of the plurality of network devices;

providing a plurality of media software components communicatively coupled to the management software component;

wherein the media software components are communicatively coupled to a storage device and the media software components are capable of controlling backups to the storage device;

selecting a media software component among the plurality of media software components using the management software component;

controlling the selected media software component using the management software component;

controlling backup and retrieval of data to the storage device using the selected media software component which comprises at least one software module configured to control the backup and retrieval of data to the storage device; and

recording a physical address on the storage device where data is located using the at least one software module which comprises an indexing software module configured to record a physical address on the storage device where the data is located.

66. The method of claim 65, further comprising controlling backup and retrieval of data to the storage device using the selected media software component which comprises at least a second software module configured to control, and to manage the physical transfer of data to and from the storage device using the second software module which comprises a data mover software module configured to manage the physical transfer of data to and from the storage device.

67. The method of claim 65, further comprising controlling backup and retrieval of data to the storage device using the selected media software component which comprises at least a second software module configured to control the backup and retrieval of data to the storage device and physical media of the storage device using the second software module which comprises a library software module configured to control the physical media of the storage device.

68. The method of claim 65, further comprising coordinating usage of the storage device using the management software component which comprises at least one software module configured to coordinate usage of the storage device.

69. The method of claim 68, further comprising storing backup and retrieval preferences of a software application using the at least one software module which comprises an application software module configured to store backup and retrieval preferences of a software application.

70. The method of claim 68, further comprising tracking the location of data across library media using the at least one software module which comprises an archive software module configured to track the location of data across library media.

71. The method of claim 68, further comprising managing system processes using the at least one software module which comprises a jobs software module configured to manage system processes.

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72. The method of claim 68, further comprising tracking usage of the storage device using the at least one software module which comprises a media usage software module configured to track usage of the storage device.

73. The method of claim 68, further comprising coordinating the transfer of data between system software components, software modules, and the storage device using the at least one software module which comprises a data transfer software module configured to coordinate the transfer of data between system software components, software modules, and the storage device.

74. The method of claim 65, further comprising providing a client software component, communicatively coupled to the management software component and the selected media software component, that controls backups of a particular network device.

75. The method of claim 74, wherein the client software component operates on the second network device.

76. The method of claim 74, wherein the client software component operates on a third network device.

77. The method of claim 65, further comprising communicating the physical address to the management software component using the selected media software component.

78. A method for backup and retrieval of data in a network comprising a plurality of computing devices, the plurality of computing devices comprising a first computing device and a second computing device, the method comprising:

providing a management software component that operates on the first computing device, the management software component controlling a plurality of media software components communicatively coupled to the management software component;

wherein the media software components are communicatively coupled to at least one backup device; and

providing a client software component that controls backups of any computing device, the client software component communicatively coupled to the management software component and the media software components;

controlling backup and retrieval of data to the at least one backup device using the media software components, which control the at least one backup device, each of the media software components comprising at least one software module configured to control the backup and retrieval of data to the at least one backup device;

recording a physical address on the backup device where data is located using the at least one software module which comprises an indexing software module configured to record a physical address on the backup device where the data is located; and

operating at least one of either the media software components or the client software components on the second computing device.

79.   The method of claim 78, further comprising controlling backup and retrieval of data to the storage device using the media software components which each comprise at least a second software module configured to control backup and retrieval of data to the storage device, and to manage the physical transfer of data to and from the storage device using the second software module which comprises a data mover software module configured to manage the physical transfer of data to and from the storage device.

80.   The method of claim 78, further comprising backup and retrieval of data to the storage device using the media software components which each comprise at least a second software module configured to control backup and retrieval of data to the storage device, and controlling physical media of the storage device using the second software module which comprises a library software module configured to control the physical media of the storage device.

81.   The method of claim 78, further comprising coordinating usage of the storage device using the management software component which comprises at least one software module configured to coordinate usage of the storage device.

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82.   The method of claim 81, further comprising storing backup and retrieval preferences of a software application using the at least one software module which comprises an application software module configured to store backup and retrieval preferences of a software application.

83.   The method of claim 81, further comprising tracking the location of data across library media using the at least one software module which comprises an archive software module configured to track the location of data across library media.

84.   The method of claim 81, further comprising managing system processes using the at least one software module which comprises a jobs software module configured to manage system processes.

85.   The method of claim 81, further comprising tracking usage of the storage device using the at least one software module which comprises a media usage software module configured to track usage of the storage device.

86.   The method of claim 81, further comprising coordinating transfer of data between system software components, software modules, and the storage device using the at least one software module which comprises a data transfer software module configured to coordinate the transfer of data between system software components, software modules, and the storage device.

87.   The method of claim 78, further comprising communicating the physical address to the management software component using the indexing software module.